

MERRIMACK MAGAZINE AND LADIES' LITERARY CABINET.

"REPLETE WITH EV'RY CHARM T' IMPROVE THE HEART,
"TO SOOTHE LIFE'S SORROWS, AND ITS JOYS IMPART."

No. 7.]

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[Vol. I.

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Miscellaneous Selections.

STORY OF ARISTOCLEA.

FROM PLUTARCH.

ARISTOCLEA, the daughter of Theophanes, was celebrated all over Greece for her virtue, her beauty, and her accomplishments. Merit, so conspicuous as her's, could not but attract the regard of the Grecian youth, ever susceptible of the finest emotions of love. Among the rest of her admirers, Strato and Callisthenes were so happy as to obtain peculiar marks of distinction.

Strato had all the recommendations which wealth and power can bestow, and, to do him justice, was not entirely destitute of personal merit. The only objection which could, with the appearance of reason, be made to him, was, that he was considerably advanced beyond that period which is called the flower of youth: an objection which has great weight with a female heart.

Callisthenes yielded to Strato in fortune interest, and family; but his person was more engaging, his manners more polite, and his acquirements more agreeable. There was a peculiar modesty in his address, which probably might be increased by a consciousness of the smallness of his fortune; but that circumstance tended to promote his interest; for, however it depressed his spirit, it taught him that submissive softness which made him appear amiable in the eyes of Aristoclea.

Strato, it must be confessed, was the most ardent lover, and his passion had been inflamed by an accidental sight of his fair charmer while she was bathing, one sum-

mer morning, in a little rivulet that glided through her father's garden.

Callisthenes perhaps in reality, felt as strong a passion as his rival, yet was he less assiduous in his addresses, from despair of succeeding against a competitor so much his superior in rank and fortune.

Theophanes, the father of Aristoclea, was much embarrassed by the importunities of the two lovers, but would gladly have given his consent to him, whose possessions were the largest, had not he been cautious of interfering in the choice of his daughter. After many delays, it was at last agreed, on all sides, to refer the affair to a neighbour of great wisdom and experience, by whose decision it was resolved to abide.

In the mean time Strato was informed, by a confidant of Aristoclea, whom he had bribed with liberal presents, that he possessed the first place in the affections of his mistress. Animated by this intelligence, he determined to break off the agreement of referring the affair to a stranger, and to leave it to be decided by the most proper judge, Aristoclea herself. Callisthenes readily acceded to the proposal, from a conviction that if he stood any chance it could be only from the decision of the fair object of his love. The father, who had previously been assured by Strato, that his daughter had shewn him a preference, entered without hesitation into the agreement, and appointed an early day for the final determination.

During this uneasy interval, various were the emotions of the two lovers. Strato already anticipated his happiness, and wanted in imagination on all the charms of his mistress. Callisthenes, on the contrary, felt all the pain and anguish of suspended hope.

At length the important hour arrived. Strato approached to hear his doom with a smile of confidence; Callisthenes in all the dejection of despair. How suddenly were the several emotions exchanged when the lovely fair one declared in favour of the desponding Callisthenes! Strato, however, after many efforts, got the better of his amazement and chagrin, assumed an air of cheerfulness, and besought the happy pair to grant him one request, which was, to permit him to be present at the

nuptial ceremony. A request so reasonable, none could deny; and amidst the congratulations of the whole company, the next day was fixed for completing the union.

The next day arrived, and the lovely pair appeared adorned with all the charms of beauty, and the smiles of innocence and joy. Strato seemed not the least happy on the occasion; but the scene was soon changed into melancholy and despair. On a sudden, at a signal given by Strato, a company of armed men rushed from an ambuscade, and seized the unhappy Callisthenes. Strato endeavored to run away with the lovely maid, but while she was struggling in his arms, she fainted away, and in the violence of her agitation, fell lifeless to the ground. Callisthenes was never heard of more, and Strato concluded the catastrophe by plunging a dagger into his own breast, and falling on the body of the unfortunate Aristoclea.

HOPE

THE LAMP OF LIFE.

IF I should judge of that part of my life, which lies before me, by that which I have already seen, the prospect is hideous. Experience tells me, that my past enjoyments have brought no real felicity, and sensation assures me, that those I have felt are stronger than those which are yet to come. Yet experience and sensation in vain persuade; Hope, more powerful than either, dresses out the distant prospect in fancied beauty; some happiness in long perspective still beckons me to pursue; and, like a loosing gamester, every new disappointment increases my ardour to continue the game.

*Hope like the glimmering taper's light,
Adorns and cheers the way,
And still, as darker grows the night,
Emits a brighter ray.*

*The wretch when doom'd with life to part,
Still, still on Hope relies,
And every pang that rends his heart,
Bids expectation rise.*

Selected for the LADIES' LITERARY CABINET

MESSRS. EDITORS,

FEW subjects are more calculated to interest the feeling heart, than that of FRIENDSHIP. This sublime sentiment has engaged the pens of many, and is so happily pourtrayed in the following "elegant trifle of literature," that, by giving it a place in the *Ladies' Literary Cabinet*, you will doubtless gratify many of your readers, as well as your correspondent.

SELECTOR.

EXTRACT FROM AN ORATION.

AMONG other spleenetic theories predicated on the imbecility of man, self interest has been warmly advocated as the exclusive principle of human action. But however the existence of any amicable affection may have been denied, however numerous the opinions which controvert it, love and compassion are still the mild monarchs of the human breast. Self may exert a more constant and uniform power, but these are the most plentiful sources of satisfaction and delight. With invincible superiority they outstrip the feeble emotions of the mind, & with unconquerable force subjugate every contending passion. With strength little inferior to the fabled force of magic, and sweetnes, which fascinates with the power of enchantment, they allure the mind into every sacrifice of interest, and guard it from the intrusion of every sordid motive. From self interest we derive no pleasures, but such as degrade virtue. From friendship we have every requital dignifying to our nature, every recompence honorary to our feelings. The blessings of the world swell the aggregate of our felicity, and the happiness, we originate in others, returns to our own bosoms with accumulated delight. Instinct might keep the animal machine in motion, but friendship and the virtues of society impart that ease and energy of operation, which make it subserve its original purpose. Dark and comfortless indeed would be the weary pilgrimage of life, if deprived of these inexhaustible resources of happiness.

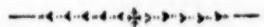
Friendship is never so splendid as when, unconfined by local views, it ranges through public life, and with comprehensive vigor aims at the happiness of mankind, never so lovely as when, like the summer zephyr, it collects and imparts salubrity in every stage of its balmy progress. Sublimated to patriotism it is irresistible. Viewed either directing with intelligence in the cabinet, or leading with intrepidity in the field; either moulding torrents of blood by a well timed policy, or withstanding the encroachments of ambition by an impregnable fortitude, it is still the same commanding power, the same august principle. Pictured in tints of blood, fating the vengeance of offended justice, or in the milder shades of peace, weeping over the desolation of slaughter, it retains the same grandeur of feature, and majesty of expression.

Friendship is also divine in the hours of seclusion. The sorrows and joys of tranquillity feel its enlivening and consolatory influence. It wanders in the frolic pastimes of village felicity, or joins in tearful sympathy with domestic grief. It revels in the convivial pleasures of the banquet, or bends with solemn sorrow over the agonizing terrors of the tomb. It raises mirth to intemperance of delight, and suppresses the throbbing violence of anguish. When cruelty and injustice invade the retreats of innocence, friendship lies in ambush to surprize their march; and if subtle villainy have already trampled on integrity, compassion will raise the guiltless victim, and lave every wound with her tears.

From friendship every scene of life derives its power to charm. Descriptions however fasci-

nating, characters however exalted, occurrences however brilliant, if they display no generous sentiments, are mere playthings of fancy, bubbles of a moment bursting at the slightest breath of scrutiny. The Hero, who spares when he has subdued, lives to more lasting fame, than he, who vindicates even justice with the relentless arm of revenge. A sensation of mercy even to the most undeserving is a noble trait of the human character. It exhibits the vigor of a virtue, whose smallest exertion is impressive; it proves the ardour of a sentiment, whose most languid spark is divine. Indications of love and friendship are universally touchstones of merit. Selfish dispositions are universally objects of indignation and contempt. The hardièt veteran in iniquity selecting a character for the basest purpose, be it even to league him in schemes of rapine and plunder, will exact the recommendation of a susceptible heart. So prevalent and impressive is this trait of character, that even they, who have discarded it, look back, like rebel children, to the guardian of their lives with emotions of filial reverence and esteem. In a mind not irrecoverably perverse friendship often steals unwelcomed. However mighty the enchantment, which binds the soul, however fierce and gigantic the passions, which guard the avenues to the heart, friendship will imperceptibly intrivate itself, and dissolve the spell. While the head is intent on schemes of wealth & grandeur, and racked with projects of accumulation; while interest and emolument are crowding the brain with speculations, the heart a rebel to the cause, a noble traitor in the selfish transaction, glows with an æthereal flame of love and benevolence.

Such is the picture of a virtue, which no lack of coloring can disgrace. Ingenuity cannot imagine a deformity in it, which will not be graceful. Sophistry cannot invent a description, that will not be eloquent in its praise. But in what situation, or under what circumstances is it found? Is it in the nurseries of vanity and affectation, where every aspiring sentiment is absorbed in the frivolous contemplation of dress and fashion? Does it follow in the splendid retinue of ambition, where lowly merit is but the foot ball of pride? Does it mingle in the confusion of business, where moral reflection ceases to be a power of the mind; or does it loiter within the gates of the slothful, waiting, like the cripple at the pool of Bethesda, for the moving of indolence? No. It is only found in those peaceful retreats, where the great sentiments of the soul are aroused, and where vanity, interest and ambition are lost in the splendor of more exalted emotions: in societies where character instead of fortune distinguishes the possessor; where the mind has room to appreciate its own powers, and having once felt and grasped its object, bears it undismayed through every opposition:—among men, who sacrifice personal to general interests, who have before them the extensive chart of human misery, and are constantly tracing the route of their benevolence.



FROM THE GAZETTE OF THE UNITED STATES.

FEMALE INFLUENCE.

FEMALE influence over the minds of men will, I trust, be readily acknowledged by every person of candor and judgment. How very important then is it for us to use every exertion in our power to render that ascendancy beneficial to mankind.

Women (generally speaking) are in such a state of strange infatuation, that I fear they will never be made sensible of the dignity of their characters, when acting in their proper sphere—

as many are persuaded in their mind, that they have nothing to do, it may not be amiss, perhaps, to direct their attention to the vast field that lies open for us to work in.—'Tis ours to stimulate, by example, virtue in man.—'Tis ours

"To rear the tender thought,
To teach the young idea how to root,
To pour the fresh instruction o'er the mind,
To breathe the enliv'ning spirit, and to fix
The generous purpose in the glowing breast."

We move the secret springs of government, give the ton to every fashion, and fix the manners, customs, and character of a nation. If we were to act up to these principles, what a glorious commonwealth would be ours! But, alas! how differently are the majority employed, in conquering hearts instead of subduing the vices of men! How many hours are daily thrown away by the gay and thoughtless, in fixing a ruffle, tufting a ribbon, hunting for lace and gewgaws (fit only for sops and fools) while the time might have been spent in performing those duties?

When we turn over the annals of history, and trace the rise and fall of empires, we must observe the former effected by wisdom, valor and temperance, while the decline is always marked by luxury, pride and dissipation. After considering this, and comparing it with the present epoch, I am ready to draw frightful images of the late of my country. How alarmingly rapid has been the increase of pride! Good women, who formerly tho't themselves well dressed in cloth of their own spinning, would now think themselves ruined to be seen in any thing inferior to silk. The noble matrons of Rome (were they alive) would look on a modern assemblage of American ladies, as so many puppets, brought upon the stage for no other purpose than to please the sight of the gaping multitude. We ought to blush at being so far excelled by the ancient illustrious philosophic Dames of Greece and Rome—Where shall we now find an Hipparchia, who would sacrifice a life of pomp and pageantry to knowledge, temperance and virtue—or a Cornelia (and many others I might mention) "who never were accustomed to wear rich attires, but such apparel as was very plain and grave, making her children (whom her instructions and example had made virtuous) her greatest ornament"? Shining indeed were the ornaments that adorned the memorable sister of Scipio. How worthy of imitation! To undertake to extract pride and vanity from the human heart, and convert the present Frenchified mode into Roman simplicity, would be as romantic and impracticable, as to raise Alpine mountains out of mole-hills, or swell fish-ponds into oceans; but to use less art and more simplicity, would certainly be easy, useful and commendable in the highest degree, as it would save time and expense; and what is still better, the fair sex would appear to much greater advantage—for when the person is over adorned we are not apt to expect much from mental endowments. I never knew a man of good sense and found understanding who did not value a woman more for a decent negligence or simple neatness in her dress. If this argument has no weight I shall give up the point and conclude my sex impervious to every good impression. Those who believe they were sent here for no other purpose than to flutter, dazzle and die, must have very contracted ideas of the wisdom of a Deity. In my opinion the greatest, richest blessing, most conducive to happiness here and hereafter, is the power of doing good, which is undoubtedly bestowed on every one and in every condition, and yet how many do we see spend their days in such a manner that we are almost induced to believe their very existence visionary?—When I become an idle, useless member of society, Oh! may I cease to live! There is no consideration which carries such hor-

